



COUNTY OF MERCER  
**Workforce Investment Board**  
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**Disability Issues Committee ♦ March 17, 2016**  
**Mercer County Technical School (Sypek Campus)**

**Present:** Maryann Moller (MCSSSD), Dana Hice-DePugh (MCTS), Nantanee Koppstein (Parent), Linda Soltes (Advancing Opportunities), Pam Mazzucca (Mercer County Human Services), Dr. Kim Schneider (MCTS), Virgen Velez (One Stop), Helen Liu (DVRS), Kelly Borden (MCSSSD), Beverly Mills (WDB), Liz Flynn (MCSSSD)

**Guests:** Natalie Cox (Financial Talent Network), Arteena Young (Financial Talent Network), John Radway (NJ Community College Consortium), Teanice Wells-Ernest (State Farm Insurance)

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Disabilities Chair, Dr. Kimberly Schneider opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Beverly Mills presented a brief update on the purpose of the meeting which was a continuation of a discussion from the last meeting with James Logan of the Financial Talent Network.

Kim talked about the variety of students at MCSSSD and how many could qualify and do well in long term employment. As she pointed out at that last meeting, Passaic County Technical School has a three teller bank on their campus; MCSSSD could do something similar on a smaller scale (a kiosk) considering the campus has over 400 employees.

Committee discussed pros and cons of bringing a kiosk to the campus. Kim also gave an example of the Heritage Credit Union in South Carolina where tellers worked with students at varying times. We don't know what this would look like in Mercer County but this type of training has been done in other States and Counties very successfully.

Liz Flynn added the Mercer County Teacher's Credit Union would be a viable option as a partner bank. They also have an ATM machine.

Virgen Velez agreed saying a local Hamilton bank would also be an option – to start with a small bank as opposed to partnering with one of the larger banks.

Kim added that personal finance is part of the curriculum. Since MCTS shares a campus with Mercer County Community College, it could be used by either campus as a program of study and creating a career pathway. The Department of Education encourages these types of conversations and collaborations.

Virgen also suggested WDB member Nina Melker (First Choice Bank) as a resource. Nina is also the Chair of the WDB Youth Investment Council.

Kim also raised the issue of disabled students and parents afraid to work because of the impact it may have on their SSI. This could also be a good initiative to help educate how they could work and continue receiving benefits. There are many opportunity to re-educate and offer wrap-around support.

Natalie apologized that there was not more representation from the financial community at the meeting. She reached out to numerous banks but, unfortunately, no interest was generated on their part. She further explained the Talent Networks were in transition. Moving forward the focus will be on employer driven strategies with Community Colleges and Technical Schools. Previously the focus was on the jobseeker. The bottom line is the Talent Networks are still awaiting direction from LWD.

Bev asked to circle back to the idea of a kiosk on campus. She said she thought the idea should still be pursued by partnering with a local smaller bank if possible.

Kim said she would reach out to Nina Melker.

Linda Soltes updated with Student Success Center stories from Advancing Opportunities. They are partnering with the NJ Chamber Foundation and are putting a college coaching model together.

Linda also asked for assistance in making contacts for their upcoming five day summer program. The committee offered suggestions and contacts. Kim further suggested Linda go back to MCCC about the use of their campus.

Meeting was adjourned.

**NEXT MEETING: May 12, 2016 @ 1:00 PM ♦ Sypek Center – 129 Bull Run Road**